2: Skrefsrud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

539 754 have never come here, as you know. Hearing this Marañ buru became dumbfounded and said to them: I have given it to you, what else have I done. Look here, look at your own marks! Seeing their different marks the men said: The marks are ours; but we have never made the marks; somebody, who knows who, have made our marks.

Then Marañ buru put his hand to his cheek and was thinking it over in his mind; then it suddenly dawned upon him: The women have made a mere child even of me. And becoming angry he said to the men: Do make marks here at once, we shall see these deceitful women. They made their marks, and he initiated them as ojhas and witchfinders, in order that they might be able to find out the witches and punish them. From that time the witches and the ojhas and witchfinders are enemies. But the ojhas and the witchfinders are unable to do anything, because the witches easily subdue their bongas, so that they are unable to catch them quickly; other people emerge in the divination, and being hoodwinked the witchfinders name other people.

Some people say that the witches, ojhas, and witchfinders have all learnt from Kẹmru guru. It is reported that very long ago our ancestors were disciples with him. With regard to becoming ojhas that is quite so, because ojhas mention him first; but as regards witches and witchfinders, I don't know whether they have learnt from Kẹmru guru or not; so far as invoking is concerned, they do not invoke him; therefore my opinion is, that they have not learnt from him.

b. The ojhas.

• 756 To become ojhas[3] we have really learnt from Kẹmru guru[4]. Very long ago his country and our country were near to each other; our ancestors have told us this. The work of the ojhas is of six kinds: 1) they make divination; 2) they sow rice; 3) they bite people or rub them with a ball of rice flour; 4) they dig up bongas; 5) they exorcise bongas; and 6) they give medicine to people. If ill people do not recover by the medicine, the 755 village people get an ojha to make divination. They bring oil and Sal-leaves to him, and, sitting down, he smears oil on two leaves, and with an incantation he rubs the leaves: Oil oil, mustard oil, man mustard oil, baru oil, Mahua oil, castor oil, bherṇḍa oil, rae rui mustard oil, this oil, reading, what will appear, a witch may appear, an imp may appear, a female demon may appear, poison may appear, who reads, the guru reads, the guru's knowledge, mae (the mother) reads, do read by Kẹhri's knowledge, by Kamru's grace, grace he reads[5].

Having done this he puts it down on the ground for a little while. Thereupon taking off one leaf he looks at it, and they ask him: Do make an offering first; what have you found? Only when you tell us, we shall understand. Now the ojha has, before making

[3] Cf. the writer's Santal Medicine and Connected Folklore, Asiatic Society of Bengal's Memoirs, Vol X. [4] See Dictionary s. v. Kẹmbru. [5] This formula has been dealt with in Santal Medicine.

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Alas, alas, my pigeon-mate,
My pigeon-mate and I, our pair is broken.
Going in which direction
Might I catch sight of the form of my pigeon-mate?

When children die, their mother cries:

Alas, alas, my parakeet,
My parakeet, O mother, flew away.
Going in which direction
Might I catch sight of the form of my parakeet?

They mention again and again various griefs of their heart, not what they have heard from others, just what at the moment comes up in their heart, this they mention in their lamentation.

b. The cremation.

764 We cremate people on the day they die. We inform the village headman and his deputy, and these two give the Godet an order: Do call the people together, we shall go to carry firewood in such and such a house. And they assemble in the house of death, taking axes with them. The women of that house grind turmeric and roast cotton seed and paddy. The men catch a fowl, apply fire to a straw-rope and pull out some thatching-grass from the eaves; the roasted cotton-seed and paddy and the thatching-grass from the eaves and the fowl they place in a worn-out winnowing-fan. And what the people of the house send with the dead one, all this they place on the bedstead, viz., clothes, a brass-cup, rupees, pice, a battle-axe, bow and arrows, a stick, a flute and all his implements. When they have finished arranging all this, four men come in, and taking hold of the four bedstead-legs they carry the dead one out; when they have brought him out into the courtyard, they carry him on the bedstead on their shoulders to the junction of roads at the end of the village street; here they put him down for a short while. Here all the women of the house and of the village anoint him with oil and turmeric, and they put a sindur mark on his forehead, and the roasted cotton seeds and paddy they drop down in small heaps at the four bedstead-legs.

[756] Thereupon an ojha exorcizes the dead one with the fowl mentioned, waving it three times round over him. Now the women return home, and the men carry the dead one on their shoulders to the place where he is to be cremated. If the man has a low rice-field with running water, they will cremate him there, and if he has not, then at a river. There they build the funeral pyre running North and South, after having cut wood. At the four corners they fix four posts to prevent it from falling down. These they call pyre-corner-posts. Thereupon they wash the hands and feet of the heir of the dead one; they

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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wing of the house serves the purpose. A midwife, a Santal woman of the profession, attends on the parturient woman with her elderly women-relatives. In cases of difficult delivery, *Ojha*s (exorcists) are summoned to perform rites so as to expel the ghosts, supposed to be creating difficulties.

When the child is born, the umbilical cord is severed by the midwife with a sharp iron weapon such as an arrow-blade. The baby is now bathed in tepid water and the navel-string buried near the main door of the room of its birth.

As regards ceremonial uncleanliness for the baby and its mother, the practice differs in different areas of Mayurbhanj. Some do not observe any segregation whatsoever; while others observe it for varying periods[1] from one to twenty-one days, during which they may not visit the room, touch the baby or its mother. The observance of this birth-pollution in some areas and its negation in others, throws a flood of light on the influence of others on their customs and manners. During her confinement, the mother is allowed to eat warm rice with salt, leaves of

1. On this point, Nabin Mañjhi, an old Santal said that custom requires that twelve days should be observed. But it has slackened and men now sometimes consider themselves ceremonially clean, immediately after a child-birth in the house.

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1902
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[754] [822] their baleful influence. Similarly, some men are supposed to possess "evil shadows," so much so, that even if snakes fall within their ambit, they cannot move an inch. When a child vomits, has [753] bowel complaints or fever, or cries unnecessarily, it is the evil eye that is thought to be responsible for [822] the malady. Let a man's evil shadow fall on rice-[273] beer, lo and behold! it does no more ferment.

[789] [754] To prevent these, Santal children are made to wear amulets of parasites on *Bhela* trees. Incantations are also uttered over some mustard seeds, a few grains of which are wrapped up in a piece of cloth and worn as a charm held by a string round the loins or the neck. In serious cases, the *Ojha* [756] (exorcist) is summoned when he chants incantations and removes the spell.

Magical charms to counteract spells are learnt by many Santals, for, who knows that 'evil eyes' may not lead them to embarrassing situations at village dances, when they may find their wearing cloth being stolen away by invisible hands? And [756] in ceremonies like marriages, the services of an exorcist are sometimes requisitioned to patrol over women with evil eyes or men with evil shadows.

Apart from these, there are various other beliefs regarding the capacity of certain men to cast magical [578] spells. Thus if an inimical person buries anything near a Santal's house, it is thought that an injury is intended.

3: Mukherjea O, Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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is intended. An exorcist is called in, who chants an incantation and allows his stick to strike all over the place. It is an unseen hand which guides him to the spot where the thing was buried. Soon they dig the place and unearth the uncanny deposit made by a malignant enemy, thus counteracting the spell cast. A peculiar instance of this nature is that when a man's cow yields a very large quantity of milk, a jealous enemy may bury milk itself, with the unholy hope that the process will diminish the supply. Similarly, if it is intended to bring harm to a man's harvest, rice is buried, and if a man's death is intended, a bone may be deposited in the earth.

754 756 789 789 578 [754]

Luck

Belief in luck is nothing special to the Santal. He has it in common with all the Munḍà tribes and the semi-Hinduised people of the Central Belt, not to speak of the caste-Hindus, many of whose superstitions have a similar flavour.

777 [171]

The Santals credit some persons with possessing "the luck of the threshing-floor." Those who are thus blest gather more harvest than others, and when they thresh the paddy, more of grains and less of chaff come out. This gift, however, can be 'stolen' by malignant persons and there are special methods of approaching such problems.

[243]

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were perplexed to think about the reason of his illness, when the two kettledrum players of the night before, could stand the secret no longer, and gave out the whole story out of pity for the young sufferer, advising the villagers to arrest the two women, who were no other than the Headman's and the Assistant Headman's (*Paranik*) wives.

The women. when summoned, furiously denied the charge of being witches. Their husbands, who were powerful village officials, became very indignant at the allegations of the two young men and they thundered, "Prove your charges or you will suffer terrible consequences." Undaunted the young men produced their share of roasted human lungs as exhibits. Then the *Parganait* (the tribal police chief) appeared on the scene and asked for a 'Kapi' (short sword) and pointing it to the two women threatened to kill them unless they cured the victim. Then out of fear, the witches cured him. In citing the above instance, it is shown how very difficult it is to detect witches when they pass under the patronage of high village officials as their wives.

The second story reads thus:—

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Long, long ago an *Ojha* (witch-doctor) accused the wives of the village Mañjhi and the Paranik to be witches. Naturally, the husbands of the two

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women became incensed, and threatened the *Ojha* with death if he could not prove his charges. The *Ojha* said that he would prove his allegation one day.

Then the Witch-doctor took his bow and arrow and went to the *Jabèrthan* (the Holy Grove in the village) after eating his evening meal and climbed a a tree. The accused witches arrived there at about 10 p.m. and began to dance and shake their heads in a frenzy. The witches very soon called a lion by the name of Lukhu, and as they whistled, one more lion arrived. They became very friendly with the lions and began to pat their manes and comb them. Then the Witch-doctor shot at the bigger of the two lions and thinking that the witches had struck them from behind, the injured lion turned to the women and killed them. Very soon, the other lion was also shot down from the tree by the Witch-doctor, who returned home.

The next morning, the witches were missed from their beds by their husbands. The story reaching the ears of the Witch-doctor, he advised the search-party to proceed towards the *Jabèrthan*, as he had seen them going to that direction. And, they were found dead there with the lions. When the Witch-doctor told his story, a wave of sensation ran through the village, and say the Patriarchs, "Thenceforth we are strong believers in Witch-craft."

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men passing under their names had learnt the art. 754
They furiously denied that they had come overnight 539
and were the more perplexed to see their special signatures on *sal*-leaves. "The marks are ours but they are forged," they protested..... All could easily guess who had tricked them thus. Marañ Burn in his anger said, "The women cheated me too as if I were a child. Put your own marks, I shall see these women."..... Then the deity taught them the craft [756] of the Witch-doctor as a counteracting factor to the Witch-craft learnt by women.

So it is, the early fathers of the Santals say, 754
that there has been going on a ceaseless war between 756
the Witches and the Witch-doctors known as *Ojhas* 791
and *Jan gurus*. But in the tussle, the exorcists are [776]
frequently worsted because the witches ally themselves with the *Boñgas* (evil-spirits) by bribing them with all the sweets of life. It is no wonder therefore that wrong persons are sometimes mentioned in the Witch-doctor's "Tel-pat" (*a sal*-leaf, moistened with oil), where the real self of the Witch ought to be reflected, and innocent persons are named therein by the witches in collusion with the evil-spirits.

The Santal traditions say that Witch-craft and [773]
the cult of the Witch-doctor are attributed by some to 'Kamru-Guru' i.e. people versed in the arts at Kamrup, whose disciples the early Santals became.

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Different Grades of Witches[1]

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554 Whatever the traditions behind Witch-craft may be, the present-day Santal in Mayurbhanj believes that there are mainly two classes of witches, viz. *Ḍàn* and *Ñañjòm*. The *Ñañjòm* are the higher class amongst *Ḍàns*. When a *Ñañjòm* becomes very expert and has all the *Ḍàn Boṅgas* under her control, she is then called a *Ñañjòm*. She then walks with her hands, and her legs are stretched upwards. Her witchery is said to be very powerful and it is said, no ordinary *Ojha* (witch-doctor) can overcome her. The *Ḍáns* generally come out at night and take with them tigers which they call dogs (*Bhàtu*). Along with the so-called dogs, they roam about in troops in a naked condition. They worship their witch-gods and practise *mantras* (charms) learnt from their *gurus* (teachers). By exercising the charm of these *mantras*, secretly and repeatedly amongst human beings and domestic animals, they cause illness and sometimes bring death to them.

[756]

754 ### *Is Witch-Craft Inborn?*

The Santals say that the power of Witch-craft is not inborn but always acquired by training. The

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[115] 1 The materials of this and the following sub-section were supplied by Messrs. Ananta Mañjhi and Samra Ch. Mañjhi of Rairangpur, Mayurbhanj.

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754 of her witchery some one of her dear relatives has fallen ill. Death comes very soon. Then, when the dead person is buried, the witch and the pupil go to the place at night along with other witches. Next, they bring out the dead body and give life back to it with the help of their *mantras*. The body is then washed and besmeared with turmeric paste and oil. Thereafter, the pupil utters other *mantras*, on which the liver of the man comes out of the body and falls on the ground. The witches take up the liver, and all of them eat a bit of it. Now the man dies really and no witch can make him return to life any more. Then they bury the dead body in its place and return home.

Some say that the witches take out the liver of the man at the time of his illness and when they eat it up, he dies. Thus when the witchery of the pupil is successful, her training is completed and she becomes a *Ḍàn*. It is said that both a boy and a girl can receive training in Witch-craft, in case they are willing and have a *Ḍàn* to teach them the craft.

Ojha (Witch-Doctor)

●756 754 Though the traditions narrated in the previous pages are myths, the fact remains that the cult of the witch-doctor is an inseparable part of the Santal social fabric. Witches are there hidden in the

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personalities of even mothers, wives, sisters and daughters; so the witch-doctor flourishes to relieve the society of its canker. The witch-doctor finds out the evil deities (*Boṅgas*) who create disturbance in the village. They trace witches among men and women. It is he only who can say if the household deity (*Oṛak' Boṅga*) or *Jahèr era* (a female deity of the Holy Grove) is angry with anybody and needs propitiation.

In course of our enquiries in Mayurbhanj rural areas, Mr. Ananta Mañjhi, a Sub-Inspector of Police of Kaptipada described to us in detail the *modus operandi* of witch-doctors.

He said that whenever a man comes to a witch-doctor to complain of some disturbance in his household, the *Ojha* at first performs some worship by keeping a water-pot, *Tursi* leaves and a piece of copper in his presence. Then he takes a cane stick, smells it together with the aforesaid articles, and throws some rice in the water-pot. Thereafter, in a trance he begins to mention the names of the father, number of children, numbers of huts and doors to locate the evil. When all these are answered in the affirmative, the evil deity who created the disturbance is named; and the offerings suitable for its propitiation are mentioned. And if it be that a witch is responsible for the trouble, the person under whose cover she

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[754] passes in the society is mentioned. To discover witches and *Boŋgas* some witch-doctors use *sal*-leaves moistened with oil and vermilion, some ring a bell, while others merely blow a conch-shell. He also gave us an account of an *Ojha* he had seen, who could, without performing any ritual, exactly say everything in detail by sitting glum after a period of moody meditation. After this, he would give elaborate instructions as to how to remove the evil spirit.

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[115] "Witches flit about with a light like the willo' the wisp," said Mr. Sundar Mohan Mañjhi, a college student of Bamanghati, Mayurbhanj. He said, "On a new moon night my brother went to a tank alone with a torch-light with him. There he met a co-villager, and to their surprise, both of them noticed one or two lights moving away. Soon after all was dark, the lights had vanished. They tried to focus the torch-light on the place where the light was last seen. But to their horror the lights appeared again and began to run towards them. On the previous day my brother had got an itching sensation on his finger. But after the aforesaid incident, a boil appeared giving unusually excruciating pain, and his palm began to swell. The pain was incessant: all sorts of medical aid were tried but to no effect. Then, after a day he disclosed the matter and the connected incident to the people.

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Ojha will take the fowl through his legs with a swinging movement of his body thrice round the bed of the patient. After this, he will require a wick with oil and on it he pours some incense and as he goes round the patient, he does the same. Next, the *Ojha* takes the fowls and offers them to the god of the disease and to the presiding deity of the *Ojha* himself. All these he will do outside the village. Next, after taking the sacrificed fowls, the *Ojha* will go home."

Thus the *Ojha* (Witch-doctor) is a person who has the power of *mantras* to waste away the evil-influences applied to men or women by *Ḍàns* or *Nañjòms*. To be perfect in his craft, he has sometimes to be in league with the witches. There is another class of men called "Sakha" in Mayurbhanj, who serve as sorcerers. They can test fortune by lots and can indicate who is a witch and has brought illness in a person or animal.

The orthodox witch-finder is called "Jan-Guru". There are two methods of training in the art. The first method requires the pupil eager for such a training, to place himself under a "Jan-Guru" as a *chela* (pupil). Then the *Guru* tells him the names of the *Boṅgas*, the process of worship and how to exercise the power of a "Jan-Guru." The pupil practises the lessons for some days, and when the *Boṅgas* are pleased, he becomes successful

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evidence showing the influence of Hindu ideas on Santal magical practices. In the race of life, the Santal finds inexplicable super-normal phenomena. He does not know how to react to the unknown and unknowable; so he has recourse to magic to deal with the impersonal forces and energies through appropriate rites and spells. This is done not by all the Santals, but only by the *Ojha*, a specialist in the art of magic and witch-craft. And he is generally the common doctor for all the Hinduised tribes and the Muṇḍà people. What the witch-doctor does is to practise the art of dissociating himself with the aim of spirit-communication, when he chants some magic formulae and makes the patent gestures while he performs the time-honoured rites to conjure the spirits. All these he does with the aid of some spirits, and although his mission is like the priest of religion to attain curative results that endure to the benefit of Santals individually or the tribe taken as a whole, it cannot be said that anti-social results do not follow due to the activities of some malignant *Ojhas* out to wreak personal vengeance on their enemies with the aid of malevolent spirits.

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or fear of certain good or evil spirits surrounding him, his practical life may be said to centre round certain other pseudo-scientific or magical rites and ceremonies. He is constantly trying to dodge, control or press into service the innumerable mischievous spirits (bongas, etc.) and forces (tejo, etc.) that bring all the misery and disaster in life. 771 776

Thus in magic, the attitude of the Santal is mainly one of the defiance of control and domination over unseeen mysterious powers and the result intended is the expulsion of evil or compulsion of natural or supernatural forces and powers in the production of desired favourable conditions or results. The Santal magic referred to above, is primarily concerned with mysterious impersonal forces and powers residing mostly in natural or artificial objects and the instruments employed in dealing with them are principally charms and spells, adjurations and incantations as also certain traditional observances and taboos. 771 789

As has been beautifully and lucidly explained by Rai Bahadur Roy in the case of the Oraons, the Santals attitude to religion and magic is not mutually exclusive but complementary and supplementary. His magical practices are the result or part of his science and constitute his applied pseudo-science. They never crowd out those simple religious rites of veneration to and propitiation of, the mysterious author of our being. But whereas in the daily affairs of life of the civilized man the scientific physician is at hand, the Santal, like other primitive people, has recourse to his Medicine-man and Bonga-doctor. These latter come with their 756

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•756 knowledge of herbs as well as the mysterious processes of evil caused by malevolent natural or human agencies and profess to cure the Santal of his daily ailments [755] [789] and afflictions. Thus magic ritualism is the speciality of Santal society and centre of the individual's life, whereas the religious ceremonials are more or less communal group affairs. The complicated cross section of 756 793 the Santal belief would be well studied in the functional 754 differentiation of the communal priest, the Ato naeke, 791 his assistant, Kudam naeke, and Dehri (hunt-priest), the herbalist medicine-man, the Bonga-doctor or Ojha and the witch-detector on Jan-guru.

Different types of religious functionaires, medicine-man, etc.

Amongst the Santals working in the Daminiko area where they are closely concentrated, it was curious to notice many functionaries named as Ojha, Janguru, Kamruguru, Raranic, Ato-Naike, Kudam Naike and Dehri. The Santal carefully draws a distinction between the officers of his social ceremonials, the high priests of the community and the specialists who may be described in modern terms as the practising physicians and the mental disease experts, the last of course not being psychopathists but masters of spiritualist seances. The sorcerer who practises evil eye and witchcraft is also sharply distinguished.

756 Studying the other allied tribes nearby we find 793 mostly a distinction between the social functionary in 754 charge of religious festivals sharply distinguished 171 from the spirit-doctor generally possessing second sight. [192] The term for the priest is Naya amongst the Birhors and Pahan amongst the Mundas and Oraons. The word Naya as also Naike may have some connection with the

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Hindi word Nayak or leader, a term often used in the old Hindu army for lieutenants. Rai Bahadur Roy shows the Birhor Naya in a plate as Raja or chief[1]. Similarly, the word Pahan may be equated with the Hindi Pradhan or chief. These indicate the power of the religious functionary in the state. It cannot be said, at least from the study of the Chota-Nagpur tribes as well as those of Assam, that the medicine-man developed into the king, for in both the areas we find the temporal chief superior in authority to the ecclesiatic functionary. But the terms themselves show that the religious functionary is given a considerable recognition in temporal status. It is possible Hindu missionaries in bygone days might have exercised temporal and spiritual authority from which these tribes again recovered, re-establishing their own indigenous superiority of their secular chief or headman.

[174] [797]

756 171 [192]

The term for the spirit-doctor with second sight is Mati among most of the primitive tribes of Chota-Nagpur. The Mundas, the Birhors and the Oraons all call their spirit-doctor Mati, the Hos of Seraikella call him Ojha[2]. The Santal term Ojha has rightly been objected to by Rev. P.O. Bodding as a Hindi loan word derived from Upadhyaya[3]. But we think he goes too far when he says that the whole system of Ojhaism is derived from the Hindus. Similar practices in Hindu society may be sometimes detected in the lowest stratum and also under even the mystic Tantric ritual. They

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[1] S.C. Roy's The Birhor, p. 340, Plate XXVIII.
[2] A Chatterjee and T. Das, Hos. of Seraikella, part I p. 28.
[3] Rev. P.O. Bodding, Studies in Santal disease and Connected Folklore, part I.

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171 have been always branded in Hindu scriptures as practices of the lowest order, a sort of getting power over ghosts, pisaches and bhuts. The Gita[1] calls the worshippers of the prets and bhuts as tamasic. Thus they are to be looked upon as survival of a pre-Dravidian [174] stage of culture in Hindu Society. From the wide- [192] spread occurrence of the word Mati it would seem that the Santals have lost their own original term and adopted a Hindi loan word as they possibly did in the case of the word for the supreme being, Thakur. The tendency to change the name can be traced amongst the Oraons due to a recent semi-Hindu and semi-aboriginal religious revival movement known as the Bhagat, comparable to the similar Kharwar movement amongst the Santals. The Mati is called Bhagat as the most dignified term for a Baisnab devotee. A change of outlook has also taken place in making the spirits no longer malevolent and the aspect of mercy and grace under Baisnab influence have been emphasised, comparable to the changing of many of the pagan gods of Europe into Roman Catholic patron saints.

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171 Hunting being one of the most absorbing occupation of all these tribes a special functionary for hunting occasions is quite natural. Amongst the Santals the Dehri still maintains his own; amongst the Birhors the Diguar or Kotowar has sunk to the position of an assistant to the priest Naya.

[539] यजन्ते सात्त्विका देवान् यक्षरक्षांसि राजसाः।
प्रेतान् भूतगणांश्चान्ये यजन्ते तामसा जनाः॥

[1]Chaptar 17, Verse No. 4.

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Rev. Bodding gives a detailed description of this theory,[1] where he describes how there is a belief of tejo causing leprosy or hydrophobia, etc., how these tejos enter the body through food etc. The tejo germs are often believed to be collected by witches for spreading disease amongst people. In the first place naturally the herbalist tries his drugs but this failing the witch-doctor is called.

The Tejo theory of disease falls in line with what Dr. Clements[2] calls disease-object intrusion. Dr. Clements in his study has apparently left out (at least he has not specifically mentioned) the important pre-Dravidian tribes of Chota-Nagpur such as Santals, Hos, Mundas, etc., and thus in his distribution map No. 2 this portion of India is not shaded as it ought to have been. He has shown this idea to be almost universal in the New World and extended up to Siberia. Another area is shown in South-Eastern Asia and the Santal under consideration would show a continuous distribution of this from Chota-Nagpur to the Pacific area. Other centres in Europe, Western Asia and Africa are recorded as being capable of tentative connections with the area of the Santal and South-Eastern Asia. The tejo concept of the Santal is identical with the disease-object intrusion concept in other areas. According to Dr. Clements (to whom the Santal area is unknown) "the criterion is the actual presence in the body of a tangible, supposedly pathogenic substance. Now although the exact nature of this substance varies considerably, such

[1] Rev. P.O. Bodding, Studies in Santal Disease and connected Folklore, Part I, pp. 6-8 Memoirs of the A.S.B., Vol. X, No. 1, pp. 1-132.

[2] Dr. Clements, op. cit., p. 209.

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ghost or demon. Dr. Clements has drawn rightly a distinction between a spirit intrusion and spirit possession.[1] Amongst the Santals the most respected person would be the Ojha who would work for good, being 'possessed' by a spirit. Whereas all the evils and sorceries are due in their belief to the intrusion of the bongas, often worked to that effect by that most hated and feared human set, the dains or witches. It is further curious to observe how the concepts of sorcery, breach of taboo, and bonga-intrusion have become closely interwoven with each other in Santal thought. The spirit or bonga-intrusion is generally aided by the human agency of the sorceress—but the witch of the intruding malevolent bonga would be powerless to offend unless the victim had committed some breach of taboo. The witch-doctor who is called in aid of the diseased, first of all enquiries carefully about the conduct of the patient so as to find out the nature of the breach of the taboo which has enabled the evil bonga to intrude and then with the help of expiatory rites and superior spirit-aid he drives away the intruding evil bonga.

Spirit intrusion, according to Dr. Clements, is probably considerably later than disease-object intrusion and had undergone considerable diffusion before the full Neolithic period of Western Asia. Clements has further shown that belief in disease causing sorcery is distributed to the ends of the earth. It is of almost universal occurrence in the Old World and extends from the north to the south even in the New World. The basic idea has been suggested to be possibly due to the "Elementargedanken" of Bastian.

[1] Dr. Clements, op. cit., pp. 216-225.

2 [Erratum: this should read "enquires." Cf. errata sheet, category 116, p. ix -- Analyst]

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754
462 Buru but Marang Buru did not detect the imposture
539 and taught them witchcraft. After their return however their husbands came back to their senses and they at once went to Marang Buru to learn witchcraft. Marang Buru said "I taught it all to you this morning, what makes you come again." They were astonished at this and protested that they had not been to him at all that morning. Marang Buru said, 'Then you must have told your wives what I forbade you.' They gave an answer in the affirmative. Marang Buru then taught the science of *Ojhaism* and *Jan* in order that they might have some advantage over their wives, and be able to overawe them. This is
• [756 why only women are witches and men are Ojhas and
791] *Jan-guru*."

754 Women, who are witches, of several neighbouring villages meet under some trees in a secluded place at some distance from human habitation generally on a Sunday at dead of night of a new moon. There, it is said, they strip themselves of their clothes and wear only the fringes of old brooms made of wild grass suspended from a girdle round their waists. Thus arranged the naked women hold the witches' dance. They have their peculiar secret songs and mantras, perform sacrifices and also try to kill people by magic very much in the same way as the old witches of Europe. It is particularly on the night of *Amawasa* (new moon), in the month of Kartic (October-November) that these witches' dances are celebrated with special eclat. Large companies of witches, it is said, move about that night and people are afraid of stirring out of their houses at a late hour that night. New girls are initiated on that night into the

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754 very late he met with a crowd of witches standing under
539 a hollow Mowah tree.

He managed to struggle free and run away. Two days after this those witches caused him to fall from a tree and break his arm. *Ojhas* failed to cure him The arm stiffened and maggots formed and in a few days Jebra became speechless and died.

683 How strong the belief of witchery amongst the Santals is even today can be easily judged from the following case of actual witch-murder reminding us of England and Europe, a few centuries ago.

A Santal of the name of Mangal Soren of the village of Bijapur, in the district of Santal Parganas, murdered a Santali woman of the name of Gaura Murmu believing her to be a witch who had caused the death of Rajam
[692] a Santali, through her witchcraft. The case was heard at the Patna High Court by Justices Kulwant Sahay and Sir T. S. Macpherson on 5th January, 1933 He (Mangal Soren) was convicted and sentenced to death.[1]

• 756 **Spirit Doctor—the Santal Ojha**

A type of Shamanism is present in full swing amongst the Santals though the authority of the headman is always respected. The Shamans among the Santals have degenerated into mere physicians with higher types of knowledge which in its theory entails communication and, partly, control of the supernatural world. Thus when the herbal doctor fails, men with knowledge of divination and favoured

1. Reported in a Calcutta daily, paper Amrita Bazar Patrika 7th Jan. 1933.

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by bongas are called in. There is no female Shaman as the female with supernatural power is always looked upon as wicked, malevolent and is persecuted as a witch. So it is to pit his higher knowledge against the wicked machinations of the witches that the *Jan guru* or *ojhas* are called who thus are important social functionaries curing individuals of their constant depression due to fear of sorcery and the evil eye or acting as village mental sanitation officials. Thus these Santal medicine-men, soothsayers and masters of incantations have to work hand in hand with the chiefs.

The name *ojha*, which the Santal uses, is not a Santal word; it is a Hindi word, used for diviner, enchanter, sorcerer, magician, etc. The word is derived from Sanskrit. The Santal has borrowed this word from the Hindi-speaking people. Rev. P.O. Bodding is of opinion that the Santal has adopted this exorcism from the Hindi-speaking people. His argument in favour of it is that the work of a Santal *ojha* in nature partly resembles that of the Hindu *ojha* and the special *bongas* invoked by the Santal *ojhas* all have names of Hindu origin in addition to their special *bongas*. But a tribe which believes so much in spirits (both malevolent and benevolent) must have some method of propitiation of those spirits as is usual among almost all the primitive tribes of the world.

The *ojha* is also a physician. The difference between the herbal doctors and the *ojha* lies in the fact that the former gives only medicine whilst the latter in addition to giving medicine tries to drive away the disease by magic incantations, etc., by the assistance of his special *bongas* whom he knows how to force to work.

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work. The *ojha* also professes to know how to find out and deal with the possible supernatural powers at work.

The *ojha* first feels the pulse,[1] sees the tongue of the patient and after having diagnosed the case he tries to drive away the complaint by uttering magical formulas or singing *jharui* songs over the patient. These mantras and *jharuis* differ in every disease.[2] After uttering the mantras the ojha blows over the patient commencing at the head and finishing downwards and towards the back. When the *mantras*[3] or *jharuis* or both have no effect, as they naturally never have in cases of disease, the next thing the *ojha* will do is to call for Sal leaves and a little mustard oil (which the Santals call Sunumbonga, lit. oil offering). With these he verifies the correctness of his diagnosis arrived at by feeling the pulse and seeing the tongue, etc. Having done this he then gives necessary instructions as regards food and treatment and himself brings or orders the ingredients wanted for the medicine to be given. The *ojha* is very particular not to divulge the secrets of his profession. Once in the Sundar Pahar village within Godda Damin in Santal Parganas a little boy was ill. The *ojha* of that village was called by the father of that boy to see and give him necessary medicine. He brought the root of a tree from the jungle and gave the boy the juice of that root as a cure. I asked the *ojha* the name of

[1] According to their idea if the pulse comes towards the thumb or index-finger it is a sign that orak bongas (house bongas) are hungry. If the pulse comes towards the middle finger the abge bongas (tutelary bongas) are hungry, if towards the ring or little finger a bonga of the field or outskirts is at work.

[2] Rev. P. O. Bodding, op. cit., pp. 1-32.

3 [Erratum: this should read "Mantras." Cf. errata sheet, category 116, p. x - Analyst]

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I asked the ojha the name of the tree but he never divulged the name of the ingredients of his medicines to me inspite of my repeated request. If the patient is not cured they call in some other more competent *ojha* from another distant village. Sometimes the *ojha* takes other means to detect the disease and the name of the *bonga* who is making the mischief. This the *ojha* does by means of a twig of Sirom broom and drawing certain squares on the earth. (This is called "Turik" by the Santal).

The *ojha* adopts the following methods to cure the disease of the patient :

(1) *Adwa Chawla* and Bul mayam.

(2) Disease localised at one point of the body and the evil cured by biting and sucking, i.e., by sucking out the intruding disease object.

(3) *Bongas* removed by digging.

(4) *Bongas* exorcised.

(5) Medicine administered.

How a Santal becomes an *ojha* : The method of initiation :

Among the Santals two kinds of *ojhas* can be seen : those who learn for pleasure's sake and those who learn seriously and earnestly. In the case of the first no initiations are required after the learning is over, whereas in the second, initiation is the essential part of the learning. To become an *ojha* (both professional and amateur) one has to be a disciple under an expert *ojha*. The first course commences in the middle of Jaishtha (May and June), their first sitting being on a Sunday or in some cases on a Friday. Every day they come to the house of the guru after taking their meals. They take their seat in the courtyard of the guru's house. In the

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756 courtyard there is an elevated place, square, or rectangular, the size generally being 1½'×1½'×1'. [824] It is made of earth, and a *Tulsi* (Ocymum Sanctum L.) plant is planted in the centre of the mound over which [346] a shed is erected. The shed is so large that it can easily accommodate 10 to 12 persons. The shed is erected by the unmarried disciples, married ones have nothing to do with the erection of the shed. The posts of this shed are of sal wood. In the centre of the shed [789] a hen's egg and a chir sakum (a thin kind of iron wristlet or arm ornament) are kept for preventing witches from molesting them. The course lasts for four months. A [562] woman cannot be an *ojha*. The first act of the *ojha* is what is called *Akhra rara* which means performing the opening ceremony, to ensure that all may go well and without any hindrance. The first evening the disciples bring along with them some *sindur* which is given to the *guru*. In five different places in the courtyard the [776] *ojha* makes vermilion marks in the name of the following five different *bongas* :—

(1) Kamru guru (the reputed first teacher of *ojha* science to the Santals),

(2) Sin *Bonga* (the sun),

(3) Kali mai (the goddess Durga),[1]^

(4) Dibi mai (the goddess Durga),

(5) Ganga mai (the Ganges goddess).

756 The following invocation is offered to all of them by
782 him after changing the names of the *Bongas* :
539
776 "Nokoe, Kamru guru (or, as the case may be, Serma Sin Thakur, etc.) amintikawam kana; nokoe cela korako

1 [Erratum: this should read "(the goddess Kali)."
^ Cf. errata sheet, category 116, p. x - Analyst]

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durup akana ; ado ninda nuta ko kijuka calakoko; tobe badi bairi noko cela alo bare lagaoako ma alo jemon hoe husit, tatka birki hoyok ma ; nae napae bareko hijuk calak mako !"

(English Translation).

"Here you see, Kamru guru, I am making a mark for thee ; here, you see, disciples are sitting ; they will come and go at night in darkness ; then may malevolence and enmity not come in contact with these disciples ; may there be no spell of an evil eye, no sudden fright ; in perfect safety may they come and go."[1]

After having invoked the *bongas*, the *guru* utters the opening mantra which is as follows :

"Akhra khollom, makra kholo, pir khollo, ke khollom ? Guru khollo, guru gia; maekhollo khollom siri Kahri gia Kamru dohoe khollo".

(English Translation).

"I have opened the place of performance, I have opened the site of performance. I have set free the stools to sit on. Who has set free (or opened)? The *guru* has set free, by the guru's knowledge ; the mother (likely Kali) has set free ; I have opened by knowledge of Sri Kahri, by the grace of Kamru I have opened."[2]

When these preliminaries (opening ceremonies) have been gone through all is ready for the commencement of teaching.

[1] P. O. Bodding, op. cit., p. 47.

[2] Rev. P. O. Bodding, op. cit., p. 48.

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756 The course is as follows :

The Course for learning *mantras* : (1) *Mantra* to drive away disease as the supposed supernatural cause of any disease. The *Mantras* are different for different diseases.

(2) *Jharni* is also different for the different cases, and used only in connection with certain complaints; the *Jharni* is sung in a special melody that differs somewhat according to the words; the disciple has to learn the words, the melody and the manner of application.

(3) The songs to be used at the *Dasae daran*, the dancing and begging wandering, when the course is finished.

(4) The special dances and play-acting and how to be possessed (rum).

(5) Medicines to be used when *Mantra* or *Jharni* or both are ineffective.

The details of these five courses have been fully discussed by Rev. P.O. Bodding in his Studies of Santal Medicines and connected folklores (Memoirs of Asiatic Society of Bengal, Vol.X, No. 1, pp. 1-132).

In order to become a full-fledged *ojha* it is necessary to receive *sid* (a Santali word which means initiation).

The course of instruction given above is brought to its conclusion shortly before the *Dasae daran*. Only a very few of the disciples receive *sid*, or care to go so far. It is not the case that the *ojha*, under whom they get their training, declares that a disciple is now ripe for getting initiation, but the disciple requests the *ojha*

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for his final touch. The *ojha* agrees if he thinks that he may be able to work independently. The *ojha* then demands the following things for the function : A new loin cloth, a goat, a pair of pigeons and some fowls and one to five rupees. 756 •

When the disciple makes these things ready the *ojha* with his wife goes to the house of the disciple and gives the *sid* there. The *guru* and *chela* first go and bathe. Coming back they clean some place in the courtyard with cowdung and the *ojha* here puts down a few small handfuls of *adwa* rice and makes some vermilion marks at each small heap of *adwa* rice (the number of heaps vary according to the number of sacrifices to be made). The loin cloth is then spread in the courtyard, the *ojha* takes his seat on it and performs the sacrifices ; the *chela* holds the goats, the fowls and the pigeons whilst the *guru* beheads them. In one of the corners of the loin cloth the money to be given to the *guru* is tied up and when the sacrifices are performed he takes the cloth and money. [782]

Sunum *bonga* **or divination by oil and leaves**: By this means the Santal *ojha* finds out the final cause or origin of disease and death. The *ojha* demands the following things from the person who engages the *ojha* ; 755

(1) Sal tree leaves (Shorea robusta, Gärtu). [824]

(2) Mustard oil.

(3) A little water.

The *ojha* then squats down and jerks his head a couple of times and then he dips the index-finger of the right hand in the mustard oil and sprinkles a few drops towards the sun and then he draws a mark of oil with

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fixes the twig in each square in the ground.[1] He then takes out the twig from the figures and touches it with his forehead and destroys the figures drawn. He repeats the operation a couple of times. When saluting the twig, a disease is mentioned; if the hand trembles, it is the disease just then named. 755

By means of the above operation the *ojha* also finds out the *bonga* who has done this mischief.

The *ojha* with the handle end of a broom of Sirom (Andropogon Muricatus Retz., Straw) draws a circle on the earth by sitting on his haunches facing the East. In the centre of the circle the *ojha* puts the handle end of the broom down and then he salutes the broom by taking it out from the circle. Uttering the name of a *bonga*, he again puts the handle end of the broom in the centre of the circle and salutes it by raising it and at the same time utters the name of another *bonga*. In this way he repeats the operation several times until his hand holding the broom commences to tremble (not intentionally). Then he knows it is the *bonga* just named who is making the mischief.

Adwa chawla and bul mayam: By this the *ojha* propitiates the spirits of the outskirts of the village. The *ojha* calls for some *adwa chawla* (rice husked without having been boiled previously) and a little vermilion which he packs in a leaf of sal tree and instructs the patient to touch this with his left hand. The *ojha* with the "Karta" (Head man) of the house comes out of the house. Here the *ojha* pricks his body with a thorn 756 782

[1] If he used a broom he keeps this in a vertical position, handle down, for a little while.

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756 782 of jujube tree. The blood that comes out is smeared on the rice; the *ojha* then scatters this rice on the ground as an offering to the *bongas* and at the same time invokes the *bongas*. Blood is given to satisfy a malevolent spirit. Seeing or tasting blood the *bongas* are very pleased and are quickly ready to listen. This offering of blood is called administering *bul mayam*; '*bul*' means to be drunk and '*mayam*' means blood.

The *ojha* then washes the parts where he has pricked himself and sprinkles a little water on his head.

755 After the *bul mayam* performance the *ojha* may take some other precautions. He calls for a *Rombro sim* (a thieving fowl). They bring him a *lisa sim* (a fowl with feathers reversed, its colour must be other than white). The *ojha* gets some charcoal and burnt clay (from the inside of a fireplace); he then grinds these two separately and puts temporarily aside wrapped up in two leaves. The *ojha* has brought with him a leaf of sal tree on which he has performed *Sunum bonga*. This he performs near the patient. He first draws a circle on the floor with a small bit of wood the diameter of which is about 12 inches. Inside this circle he makes a number of marks resembling those on the leaf; he then spits on the drawing within the circle and puts his left heel heavily down on it and finally with the left heel rubs out the marks he has drawn. He performs this operation several times. During this time the *ojha* remains silent. The object is to undo the deception of a possible witch. After this, he puts a leaf-plate on the ground, draws a circle on it and puts some burnt clay from the fireplace and

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179 Pabban. The Santals observe this festival on the last
796 day of the month of Pous, just like the Hindus do.

Besides this, the Santals take part in the Durga Puja festival of the Hindus. They wear new clothes and attend the Puja with wives and children and enjoy the fun for five days like the Hindus.

• 756 There exists a great controversy about the institu-
177 tion of Ojhaism among the Santals. There are possi-
174 bilities of its having been borrowed from the Hindus by the Santals since the practice of this form of magico-religious ritual has much in common between the two groups, namely the Santals and the Hindus. Rev. [114] Bodding also points out the probability of the borrowing of the principles for *Ojhaism* and much of its ritual from the Hindus though he does not thereby exclude completely the converse. In part substantiation of the above contention, which however is opposed by some authors on the subject, may be cited the striking similarity between the names and functions of the Santal and Hindu *Ojhas*, pointing to perhaps a strong interconnection between the two groups in respect of *Ojhaism*. The very name *Ojha* is Hindi and is adopted by the Santals from Hindi speaking people. Further it is interesting to note that *Ojha* is a caste name among the Hindu Brahmins, and in the early days the occupation of this caste group was mainly soothsaying, foretelling and astrology and curing snake bites etc. The concentration of such groups is in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. It may therefore be considered very probable that the Santals have borrowed from the Hindus the essentials of *Ojhaism*, though certain indigenous

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elements have doubtless modified its practice among the Santals

Christian influence. In 1862 the Church missionary society started work in the Godda, Pakur and Rajmahal subdivisions and they built a colony for their converts in the Western Duars (in Godda). The Scandinavian Mission started their missionary activities in the Dumka subdivision in 1867. In 1884 the American Methodist Episcopal Mission started work in the Pakur subdivision. Other missions were the Christian Women's Board of Missions, a Wesleyan mission, which started work at Deoghar subdivision.

Thus it can be seen that after the Santal rebellion several Christian missions started their activities in and outside the Santal Parganas. It is stated in the Seventy fifth annual report of the Santal mission of Northern Churches (1941) that 25,000 Santals were converted. The record of missionaries has been a very creditable one in some respects, particularly in regard to education, sanitation, medical care and general raising of the standard of living, but in context of religion the missionary zeal has been somewhat misdirected. These converts are cut off from any activity that savours of worship of tribal *Bongas*. They do not contribute in cash or in kind to the offerings associated with village festivals. They do not take part in the worship of the five deities of the Jahersthan.

The converted Santals and even some non-Santals refer to Adam and Eve as *Pilchu Haram* and *Pilchu Burhi* who according to the tradition of the tribal Santals are the parents of mankind and the human race

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The Santals have many things of value in their culture. There are many elements that are well worth preservation and which have a great deal to teach the so called civilized neighbours. 177

The Santals have a large number of folklores and folk songs which contain many new ideas and thoughts. Their art of recreation brings a balance in their life which is lamentably absent in the civilized neighbours. 538

The political organisation of the Santals is worth studying. Although they have neither studied any literature on this line nor they have any written constitution yet they are extremely disciplined people and are managing their tribal affairs in a highly democratic way. The communal life of the Santal is well organised, in which everything is shared even joy and sorrow of one is the joy and sorrow of the whole community. This virtue is lacking in the so called civilized society where life is individualistic and so we find more selfishness in civilized people. 66 62 184

The knowledge of herbs and medicines of the Santal medicine-men is highly developed. Rev. P.O. Bodding with the help of two qualified doctors, Mrs. Bodding M.B. & Ch.B. (Edin) and Dr. B.B. Bogh, collected a large number of plants and other stuff used by the Santal medicine-men. He published the names of the plants and other stuff, the list of prescriptions and veterinary medicines in the memoirs of the Asiatic Society of Bengal in two parts.[1] Rev. Bodding men- 278 756 757 278 757 278

1. P.O. Bodding—Studies in Santal Medicine and connected folklore—Memoirs of the Asiatic Society of Bengal (Calcutta) Vol. X No. I p. 1-132 and No. II p. 133-426 (1927).

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and legends of Hinduism. The linguistic evidence shows how their material culture has been vitally affected and has some bearing on the more elusive realm of thought and belief. The grammatical structure of Santali has little in common with that of the Indo-Aryan tongues. It is an agglutinative and not an inflectional language. There have, however, been large and extensive borrowings of words. An instructive example can be taken from their method of husking rice. The term *ḍhinki*, used for a foot-pedal rice husker, has been borrowed from Bengali, and a *ḍhinki* is found in almost every home. The rice that is husked at the time of making sacrifices must be prepared in the home of the village priest, and in its preparation the use of the older and more primitive *ukhuṛ* is obligatory. This is a wooden mortar in which the rice is husked by hand with a wooden pestle, or *tok*. Both these words are Austro-Asiatic in origin. It is likely that when the household adopted the new method of husking rice the tribe did not change over from the old method of husking the sacred rice for fear of a loss in efficacy. One reason given is that as the *ḍhinki* is operated by the foot, rice husked in the *ḍhinki* is unclean and so unfit for offering to the spirits. It may be that the association of a mortar and pestle with sexual symbolism enhanced its magical value. The symbolism in this case is familiar to the Santal mind, for one way of expressing differences of sex is to refer to boys as "pestles" and to girls as "mortars". The *ukhuṛ* has to be used by the medicine man in preparing remedies; it is also used at marriages, when the feet of the bridegroom's party are washed over an *ukhuṛ*, and an *ukhuṛ* filled with water is required during the death ceremonies. In Bengal the rice which forms the daily food of the people is boiled before husking, and the Santals follow the same method in preparing it; but the rice used in sacrifices, *aḍwa caole*, is never so treated, being dried in the sun.

Among their domestic animals, the fowl, the dog and the goat have non-Bengali names, while the names for pigeons, sheep, pigs and, most important of all, their cattle are borrowed. Fowls, goats and pigs are all used in their sacrifices. In the realm of wild life the Santal has found little need to borrow a vocabulary from his neighbours. Wild animals, birds, trees and shrubs, many fish and insects, also snakes, have Santali names. The same is true of most of the weapons used in hunting. Although the term for paddy is Santal, the names of all the implements now used in rice cultivation and the terms for the

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wait for men. Women are protected from the designs of these ghosts by the iron bangle which they wear.

Ghosts of the dead and other private spirits who are given the title of *boiga* form part of the stock-in-trade of the two classes of people among the Santals who deal regularly with the occult- the magicians and the witches. They are bitterly opposed to each other's influence, and they clash for the most part on the battleground of sickness and disease. An exhaustive treatise on the Santal attitude to disease has been published, and shows conclusively that, as with ghosts so with sickness, the ideas of the Santals are common to all the lower strata of society in North India.[1] These ideas are not simple but complex, and range from the realm of the rational to the fantastic. Disease is sometimes ascribed to natural causes, particularly when the chain of causation is fairly obvious and can be repeated in a series of experiments; there is a whole class of food described as *batol*, which means that it is unwholesome. There are hundreds of remedies that require no supernatural aid to make them effective. Some remedies are the property of all, while others are the property of individuals and the knowledge of their ingredients is a closely guarded secret. Chaitan of Churimara began his career as a physician in response to a specific need. When he was a young man a friend had come to him in great distress and said that his boy was vomiting blood. He turned to Chaitan and asked him if he knew of any medicine that would be good for the boy. Chaitan was so sorry for his friend that he promised to do something, although when he said this he had no notion what he should do. As he was setting out for his friend's house he prayed to *Cando* and asked that he might be shown what he ought to do; at the same time he shut his eyes and kicked at the soil. As he opened his eyes again he saw a plant, which he immediately dug up. He ground the roots to make a medicine, and the boy recovered from his sickness. Since then he has applied the same remedy to many other cases. One of his patients had been extremely ill, he said, but was now the father of four or five children! He has been in great demand as a physician, and claims that *Cando* subsequently revealed many remedies to him. Sometimes it is claimed that remedies are made known in dreams. The plant that was first revealed to Chaitan was the *upel kundi* plant, which has a red flower.

[1] P. O. Bodding, *Studies in Santal Medicine and Connected Folklore*, *Memoirs of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Vol. X.

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There are many individuals famed in some degree as physicians. Some are equivalent to the general practitioners of the West, while others are specialists who possess remedies for particular diseases. There are others who might be described as veterinary physicians. When, however, an illness persists the patient and the relatives suspect that some supernatural agency is at work, and they then call in the *ojha*, or magician. The *ojha* is not necessarily a Santal, though there are now so many Santals who are learned in *ojha* art that it is usually possible for a Santal to be called. They are men possessed of special powers who have gone through a period of training, followed by an initiation ceremony at the hands of an *ojha*, and they in turn pass on their knowledge to their own disciples. Tradition says that formerly this training was strenuous and serious. It took the form of a course that lasted from May until October, the time of the *Dàsàĩ*, which is the same as the Dasserah festival of North India and the Durga Puja in Bengal. Throughout this period the disciples had to attend at the house of the *ojha* every evening until finally they were initiated. At the conclusion of this ceremony the *ojha* used to take his disciples on a begging expedition through the surrounding villages on three successive days.

These begging parties are a familiar sight in the countryside during *Dàsàĩ*, and they represent almost all that is left of the old initiation schools conducted by the *ojhas*. Every village has its bands of youths who meet each night for a month to practise the songs and dances and then go out to collect rice and cash from the neighbours. It is at this time that the *buaŋ* is used. When the young men sally forth they are dressed in picturesque fashion. On this occasion alone men are permitted to wear women's dress. They put on *saris* shaped like a skirt and a small waistcoat, a garment worn by the women in many parts of North India, though it is not normally worn in Bengal. They also don earrings, bangles and anklets, while on their heads they wear turbans in which they fasten peacock feathers.

These bands have little relation to the *ojhas* and they operate under their own leaders. One of the links remaining between this practice and the *ojhas* is the reference in some of the songs to the old *gurus* of the magicians, and in particular the original *guru*, a mythological person named Kąmru. The name may possibly refer to a person who came from the western districts of Assam, a region known as Kamrup, but he is now entirely mythical. He is regarded as the originator of magical knowledge and as belonging to the race of *bongas*. According to one version, he is a

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son of the god Siva.[1] In one of the songs sung by the *Dàsàĩ* youths at Sarenga the first verses are as follows:

> Which *guru* has a silver stick, sister, O sister,
> In the middle of the Kasai river, sister, O sister,
> The silver stick with a sound like tinkling bells?
>
> *Dhorom guru* has a silver stick, sister, O sister,
> In the middle of the Kasai river, sister, O sister,
> The silver stick which sounds like tinkling bells.[2]

The mention of *Dhorom* as the first *guru* links *Dàsàĩ* lore with a god who is prominent in the cult of the earth mother, a cult that is common among the Hindu lower castes and among many of the Central India tribes, for whom the Dasserah is one of the important festivals of the year. The song proceeds to repeat the same question twelve times in all—the number twelve here again symbolizes completeness—and the answer is repeated with a different name each time. The names of the *gurus* as they are repeated at Sarenga are Dhorom, Siba (Siva), Kamru, Sidho, Gandu, Rohora, Bati, Buaĩ, Lokhon, Bhadu, Ratu and Ramjit. The first eight names are mythical or symbolic, while the name Lokhon connects the song with local tradition, and Ramjit was the name of the last leader of the band before the present one. The names standing between these two also commemorate local *Dàsàĩ* leaders.

The practice by which *ojhas* are made today is informal and usually results from the attachment of a youth to an *ojha* as his servant for an unspecified period. There is a considerable amount of rivalry among the *ojhas*, who endeavour to steal a march on each other and especially to get hold of the powers of dead magicians. The following story, a literal translation of one that was current in the area, illustrates the nature of the power that they wield: "One day a man who had set out for his work in the jungle—he was a jungle keeper—saw three slender *sarjom* trees tied together and put down in the path at a cross-roads. He thought to himself: 'Now who could it be who was stealing trees from the jungle?' Saying this, he picked up the sticks and went on to the jungle. When he arrived there he thought: 'There is no need for me to carry these sticks round with me all the time; I will put them down here and pick them up when I am on my

[1] For a full discussion see Bodding, *Studies in Santal Medicine and Connected Folklore*, *Memoirs of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Vol. X.

[2] See Appendix B, No. 15.

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way home.' And so he propped them up against a tree, but as he did so a branch from the tree fell down with a crack, a branch as thick as a man could embrace. When he saw that such a thick branch had fallen he was greatly puzzled, for there was no strong wind and the branch itself was not rotten. He went on with his work, but when he returned home in the evening he related his adventure. An *ojha* of the village, hearing what he said, sighed and exclaimed: 'Ah, you have gone and spoilt all my work!' 'And what have I spoilt of yours?' asked the jungle keeper. 'In those three sticks which you picked up', replied the *ojha*, 'there was a *boŋga* on whom I had cast a spell. When he left the sticks he gave you a sign by snapping off that branch and making it fall. You are fortunate that it did not fall on you and break your neck!' The jungle keeper said: 'Impossible; there was no one there.' Then the *ojha* explained: 'All right, I shall tell you—listen! Recently an *ojha* was buried in that jungle. On the night of the new moon after his burial two of us went along to take possession of him. My companion made circles on the ground a little distance away from the grave, and I seated him there and protected him with spells. I told him not to be afraid, for I had also made myself safe with spells. Then I began to sing certain spells to make the *jiu* of the *ojha* come out. After a long time his *jiu* came out in the shape of the *ojha*, and I sent him over to the one sitting within the magic circles. He changed his appearance and took on the shape of a leopard, then a jackal, then a bear, in order to frighten us, but he could not even touch us, for we were protected by spells. Meanwhile by means of our spells we blocked the road back to the grave and so captured him. At length he returned to his own shape, and when we told him that he had to go home with us he made a great fuss and begged us, "First give me a meal of men" or "Let me eat some bullocks and some goats and then I will go with you", but we gave him no encouragement at all. Finally, he agreed to go with us if we would give him water to drink every morning, with sweetened rice and other sweets on festival days, so we tossed him the bundle of sticks and told him to get inside them. He vaporized and got into them, and then we cast a spell on the bundle. We had taken the bundle down to the cross-roads and had set it there with a spell to guard it. We intended to bring it to our home later, but when you picked it up you took it outside the circle cast by the spell and he evidently took his chance and ran. Oh, he is clever and never will come back! Now if you had ever been going about the work of an *ojha* and had taken one of those sticks in your hand,

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whatever you wished would have come to pass. You could have wound a string round one of those sticks and then if you had taken the string along with you to a cock fight you would have had good fortune, and the same would apply in hunting. But if you did not behave properly towards it and make offerings to it, it could finish you off and eat you. So that is what it is all about, and now that person will stay around anywhere at all and frighten people. He has become a *bhut*.'"

One of the methods by which it is possible to steal the powers of a dead magician, or rather to capture his "soul force", was explained in the following manner. It is necessary to go to the spot where he was cremated and there draw a picture of the dead man on the ground. If one made offerings to this picture and recited the appropriate spells, he could be brought under control. Some years ago, when a well-known *ojha* in the village of Bankadaha had died, his disciples kept guard over the spot where he had been cremated for some time after his death.

When the Santal *ojha* is called in about a case of sickness or of sudden death, his first function is to try to determine the type to which the particular misfortune belongs. He consults the oracles in order to discover whether natural causes are to blame, in which case it is called plain *rog*, or sickness, or whether it is necessary to lay the responsibility on a witch, a *boiga* or a displeased ancestor. He sits down in the courtyard and waits until two *sarjom* leaves and some mustard oil in a leaf cup are brought to him. Holding one of the leaves in his left hand, he dips his right index finger in the oil and sprinkles some drops on the ground as an offering to the spirits. While doing so he asks for guidance in determining the correct cause of the illness or fatality. He then puts a drop of oil into each of the compartments of the leaf that he is holding, one drop representing one possible agency of evil. There is one for natural causes, three or four for different *boigas*, and other drops represent households in which there may be a witch, including the sick man's house, his father-in-law's house, the houses on the other side of the village street, and so on. When the drops are in position the *ojha* rubs the two leaves together and then holds the first leaf up to the light to discern the shapes that have been taken by the oil. He pronounces the cause of the disease in accordance with the pattern that he sees. If he decides that the *boigas* are displeased, he performs the ceremony known as *bul mayam* in much the same manner as the village co-priest does during the festivals. The blood which he

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to leave. On one occasion I was informed that a woman had been killed as a suspected witch, but it was impossible to make a satisfactory investigation; and on another occasion I was asked to see the body of a young man where the villagers were convinced that witchcraft had been responsible for his death. It appeared to be a case of poisoning. Fortunately, some of the evidence relating to witchcraft and murder has been documented. Murder by Santals is comparatively rare, but fear of witchcraft is one of the most frequent motives at work. Statistics have been published for the Santal Parganas for the period 1931–40. During this period there were seventy-eight cases of homicide by Santals before the courts, and of the seventy-eight it was definitely established that sixteen were due to accusations of witchcraft.[1] It is reasonable to infer that the actual number was somewhat larger, for in most such cases the sympathy of the community is on the side of the murderers, and so it becomes a fairly easy matter to conceal the crime.

It appears that in other parts of North India the magician, or *ojha*, is a dealer in "black magic",[2] but among the Santals the order of *ojhas* might almost seem to have been called into being because of the need to defend society against the evil influence and the sorcery of witches who are the enemies of society. The *ojha* is a benefactor of society and seeks to overcome witchcraft by invading the territory of the witches and using their weapons. Each of the opposing camps is prepared to lay hands on any weapon that may serve its purpose.

The same truth is evident in all the Santal's dealings with things that he cannot understand. The attitudes summed up in the terms "magic" and "religion" are both in evidence. It is not usual in these days to distinguish sharply between them.[3] Magic is used by the Santal as a tool to accomplish many and varied ends. It is not absent from his dealings with the spirits, and it can be used for social as well as antisocial ends. It does

[1] S. M. Naqavi, "Santal Murders", an article in *Man in India*, September 1943, Vol. XXIII.

[2] W. Crooke, *op. cit.*, p. 423: "In Northern India the worker of black magic is the Ojha, a term derived from the Sanskrit Upādhāya, 'teacher', and the Syāna, 'cunning man', who follow the traditional methods handed down from their predecessors. Their stock-in-trade is a collection of Mantras or spells, many based on the magic of the Tāntras, 'rule, ritual', used in the cult of the Sakti or female energy, by which they are supposed to acquire the power of controlling spirits or demons, and of forcing them to obey the orders of the sorcerer."

[3] Cf. G. and M. Wilson, *The Analysis of Social Change*, Cambridge University Press, 1945, p. 72: "Magic for us, though it may not postulate any transcendent reality, is an integral part of primitive religion."

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the *Sakrat*. At this time offerings are made to the ancestors in each house, and the celebration is accompanied by a display of stick dancing, which has replaced the former "sword and shield" dance. At the end of the following month the *Mag Sim*, the hen at the end of the month of *Mag*, is offered. In former times the village officials used to resign at this time and could be either replaced or reappointed, but the only relic of the old practice that has survived is that the headman has to treat the whole village to beer. Contracts with servants are renewed during the festival, and they receive the cloth that is always a part of the contract. In connection with rice cultivation there is the *Erok' Sim*, the hen that is offered at the time of sowing, and *Nawâi*, when the first fruits of the first rice crop are offered in the sacred grove. Before this takes place the new rice must not be eaten. The village priest cuts the first handful of the crop and offers some at the foot of each of the chief trees. A sprig is also tied round the trunk of the trees and remains there. While the prayer is being said, milk is poured on the offering. After the priest has done his part, similar offerings are made in every house to the house spirits and the ancestors, the rice being taken from the crops belonging to the family. In varying degrees the Santals share in some of the festivals and practices of the low-caste cultivators around them. In the early monsoon days, during the period of *Rohini*, which is an auspicious time for sowing rice, they make a mark round their houses with cowdung as a protection against snakes. The snake goddess festival occurs in late August, and although its observance is not widespread among the Santals there are some local celebrations, especially when there is an *ojha* in the village. The *ojhas* all keep this festival, and others go to them at this time to ask for medicines against snakebite. Some Hindu festivals, as we have seen, furnish the occasion for large gatherings of Santals. At Sarenga, in addition to the Lakshmi Puja, a somewhat smaller gathering takes place during the hot weather in connection with the celebration of the Siva Gajon at a local temple. At this time the Charak, or hook-swinging festival, otherwise known as the *Pata*, takes place. The practice has almost died out within the last fifteen years. It had been prohibited by the government, but as long as the old generation, which was accustomed to the practice, remained it continued with gradually diminishing fervour. The Santals gather now to sing and to dance. They also join the throngs of pilgrims, sightseers and traders who collect at the Bogri *mela*, or fair,

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796 some thirty miles from Sarenga. This fair, which is one of the most famous in Western Bengal, takes place at the time of the Dol Jatra near a temple dedicated to Krishna. The last day of the *mela* is chiefly renowned for the fact that on that day there is a great concourse of Santals for dancing.

[171] [177] One festival which is shared with tribes living right across Central India[1] is the *Karam*. The fact that it is not peculiar to them is known to the Santals, and one informant once told me that they must have borrowed it from the Mahato. He had seen that the Mahato celebrated it and knew of the special relationship between the Mahato and his own people. Many of the songs contain references to Ram and Lokhon, heroes of the *Ramayana*. The festival is rather difficult to characterize, for its celebration takes different forms and arises from different causes. It is connected in all cases with the desire for prosperity, but it may be either a public or a private celebration. The *karam* is a tree[2] that is associated with the god Krishna in the *Vishnu Purana*. When a shoot of this tree is found growing in the land round a house or springing from the roof thatch, the head of that house is responsible for instituting an annual celebration of the festival. The fact that while it is celebrated annually in a great many villages it is not found invariably is perhaps accounted for by its accidental origin. The festival is also associated with certain other definite events. In some cases the leading celebrant is the local *ojha*, who holds a *Karam* [156] festival at the beginning of the month of *Dāsāē* and before he sends out his disciples on their annual begging expedition. [622] [764] Sometimes it is celebrated in connection with the appointment of the new headman of a village, and sometimes in connection with the death ceremonies of a man of substance. Sometimes it is associated with the *Mak' Mōṛē*, an occasional sacrifice to the [782] "Five". These spirits are peculiarly liable to become offended, and offerings are made to them to avert their wrath, which takes the form of inflicting a poor harvest or an epidemic. Whatever the occasion may be, the celebration of the *Karam* is regarded as an insurance either on behalf of a particular family or on behalf of the whole village. It may be either a way of enhancing good fortune or of warding off evil. Where in the area it has become an annual festival it is held at the full moon in the month of *Sau* (July-August). At sunset the un-

[113] [1] References to Central India are to be found in *Folk-Songs of the Maikal Hills*, by V. Elwin, Oxford University Press, pp. 3–11.

[2] *Adenia cordifolia*, Hook., f. and B.

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553 cry like crows and kites! In that case we call an *ojha* to tell us the reason and we say to him: 'See what this child is up to; why
• [756] does he cry?' The *ojha* asks for oil, reads the omens and then
[787] says: 'Such and such a dead relative is claiming that the child be named after him.' This usually happens when we want to name the child after someone on the mother's side. The dead ancestors on the father's side do not like to have it so." The above passage occurs in a part of his diary where Babulal was reporting the birth of twins, for whose naming there are special rules. Twins are known as *boŋga* children, and their advent is not regarded as a misfortune. He continued his narrative: "Today the babies did not cry at all, for they were to have *boŋga* names." One explanation is that *Marañ Buru* had twelve sisters who were twins, and I have been told that the children of *Cando* were
551 twins. The pairs of names that are given to twins are drawn
845 from Hindu mythology and they are, for girls, Cita and Kapur, Dargi and Porgi, Hisi and Dhumni; boy twins are named Ram and Lokhon, Loba and Kisur, Cand and Bhaira, Sidho and Kanhu. Most Santals when asked have denied categorically that dissimilar twins are possible. The only case met with in eleven years were twins born at the Mission Hospital in Sarenga, and it proved impossible to follow up their subsequent history.

551 The name given at the *chatiar* ceremony is known as the *bhitri ñutum*, which means literally the "inner" or "private" name. Everyone knows what his own inner name is, but it is little used by others. In addition to his private name each person receives at least one nickname, which is called the "upper" or "outer" name. This is necessary in part because of the prohibitions attaching to the use of names by certain categories of relations. If a boy has been named after one of his grandfathers, then all those who are prohibited by relationship from pronouncing the grandfather's name, e.g. the grandmother, are equally prohibited from applying that name to anyone else. Even those who could pronounce the name do not do so while the grandfather is alive, in order to avoid confusion. The nicknames given in early childhood do not remain fixed but are replaced by others as the boy grows up. Some result from the same kind of easy intimacy and teasing affection with which we are familiar in English society and are bestowed by those who stand in a
[177] "joking" relationship with the boy. A new element has been introduced through the naturalization of many Hindu names, particularly among those Santals who have received some edu-